

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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August 14, 2008

The Honorable Phil Isenberg, Chair
And Members of the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force
c/o John Kirlin, Executive Director
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento CA 95814

Dear Chair Isenberg and Task Force Members:

SUBJECT: Delta Protection Commission Response to Delta Vision Strategic Plan (2)

The Delta Protection Commission (Commission) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on Draft No. 2 of the Delta Vision Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan). The time that Task Force Member McPeak devoted on July 24, 2008 to participate in a discussion with the Commission about the Delta Vision and Strategic Plan is also appreciated.

As you are aware, the 23-member Commission is comprised of diverse Delta representation, including resident stakeholders, local reclamation districts, local and regional governments, and state agencies. Thus, as you would imagine, such diversity promotes equally diverse perspectives relative to the Delta. The input provided herein is submitted pursuant to initial discussions by members of the Commission serving on the Delta Vision Stakeholder Advisory Group and subsequently the Commission on August 14, 2008.

While the comments were composed taking into consideration the provisions of the Delta Protection Act, the Commission's role under the Act, the policies of the Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta, and the Commission's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan, the following documents from member entities of the Commission were also taken into consideration as relevant guiding principles: Delta counties Multi-county Resolution on Water and Delta Related Issues and the "Draft" North Delta Water Agency Policy Principles.

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors

Solano County Board of Supervisors

Yolo County Board of Supervisors

Association of Bay Area Governments

Sacramento Area Council of Governments

San Joaquin Council of Governments

Central Delta Reclamation Districts

North Delta Reclamation Districts

South Delta Reclamation Districts

West Delta Reclamation Districts

Bay Delta Authority

Department of Boating and Waterways

Department of Fish and Game

Department of Food and Agriculture

Department of Water Resources

State Lands Commission

State Parks

Delta Landowner –
Outdoor RecreationDelta Landowner –
Production AgricultureDelta Landowner –
Wildlife Conservation

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While the comments are provided below in a concise format, members and staff of the Commission are available to provide additional details and clarification upon your request.

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE:

- Delta as Place should be included as a co-equal value;
- While the need for compatibility among governance structure entities is recognized, the statutory appellate authority of the Commission should remain with the Commission and not be moved to the California Delta Ecosystem and Water Council (Council);
- The Council, Conservancy and Commission, as governance structures, should include balanced representation;
- The proposed Conservancy should have an “in-Delta” structure using the Sierra Nevada Conservancy as a model (in contrast to an extension of the Coastal Conservancy) in order to assure local government and stakeholder inclusion (in addition to State interest) in decision making;
- The governance structure should provide for assured cross coordination between the In-Delta Conservancy and the Commission; and
- Funding support and staffing resources for the Commission as a “State entity contributing to the management of a statewide resource” needs to be recognized as necessary in order for the Commission to function in an enhanced role as discussed in the Strategic Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESTORATION

- The need for streamlined/general permitting, including environmental review, for activities to be implemented pursuant to the Strategic Plan should be acknowledged and tools for accomplishment should be provided;

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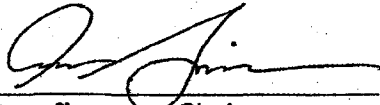
- The Delta Dredging Long Term Management Strategy effort currently underway by the Corps of Engineers in partnership with local and state interests should be given consideration as a model to be utilized for achieving streamlined permitting and environmental documentation;
- Funding for levee “maintenance” and related dredging activities to provide material for levee maintenance should be cited throughout the Strategic Plan where levee sustainability is referenced;
- Maintaining a diverse and highly productive agricultural economy should be a “prominent” objective throughout the Strategic Plan;
- Encouragement of “value added” agricultural programs, including ag-tourism, should be cited as a priority;
- Assurances should be provided that agricultural easements, as well as habitat easements, will be promoted under the program to be administered by the In-Delta Conservancy in coordination with the Commission;
- Programs implemented under the Strategic Plan requiring the conversion of lands to habitat should take into consideration characteristics of highly productive agriculture lands, and compatible uses, such as: the famous Lodi and Clarksburg wine growing regions; islands such as Sutter that are mapped out of the 100-year flood zone; well drained and deep well drained soil such as found on New Hope; areas such as Sutter and New Hope where permanent trees and vines are planted, state of the art reclamation districts maintain the levees, water quality at the highest level is maintained, tomato yields are outstanding, alfalfa quality is recognized as one of the best in the Delta, and dwellings such as homes, shops and valued added ag components currently exist; and
- Any environmental documentation for the Strategic Plan should include an analysis of the cumulative economic loss of agricultural lands of regional and statewide value and significance.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input into the Delta Vision process and your recognition of the Commission's role in preserving, protecting and enhancing the unique and valuable agriculture, habitat and recreation resources of the Delta.

Please let me know if you need additional information relative to the comments provided herein. The other members of the Commission and Linda Fiack, Executive Director are also available to provide further clarification if needed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arne Simonsen', written over a horizontal line.

Arne Simonsen, Chairman

Delta Protection Commission

cc: John Kirlin
Leo Winternitz
DPC Members
Linda Fiack